

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**"Anting" by Magpie-lark.**—On July 31, 1948 I saw a Mud-lark<sup>128</sup> disturbing a nest of ants—the common red ants. It then began picking the ants up and squeezing them. The bird's mate was looking on but did not seem interested in what the other bird was doing. The bird appeared quite healthy and did not mind the ants crawling about its feathers.  
—JOHN GALLOWAY, Borden

[This letter was sent to Miss Olive Seymour, of the Correspondence Classes of the Education Department and specimens of the ants were enclosed. They were identified by Mr. C. F. H. Jenkins (Government Entomologist) as the common meat ant (*Iridomyrmex detectus*). The case reported is another interesting example of the phenomenon of "anting" which has been referred to earlier in this journal (vol. 1, no. 1, June 18, 1947, p. 21). The Magpie-lark or Mud-lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) has previously been recorded as "anting."  
—EDITOR.]

**Birds Mobbing Fox at Caron.**—While walking through some light York gum forest, I had pointed out to me some very excited birds in a distant tree. On investigation I found a mixed flock of birds mobbing a fox. The group consisted of nine Port Lincoln Parrots, four Red Wattle-birds and about fifteen Dusky Miners. The parrots were in the top of the tree, keeping quiet and still, but were very interested. The miners were flying to and fro but were not calling very much. Low in the tree, with their feathers fluffed out, the wattle-birds perched, making hissing noises. The fox was under an *Acacia*, looking up at the birds. As I approached, I frightened it. It withdrew to a thicket a few yards off, turned and glanced at the birds for a moment, and then loped into the thicket and out of sight. The fox had no bird in its mouth, nor was there any sign of blood or feathers on the ground. The birds did not disperse until some time after the fox had gone, but remained perched quietly in the tree.  
—L. E. SEDGWICK, Caron

**A Rare Jewel Beetle.**—The announcement that a marine biological laboratory will be erected at the Mudurup Rocks reserve, on the limestone headland just south of the Cottesloe jetty, recalls



*Stigmodera magnetica*—Olive Seymour, del.

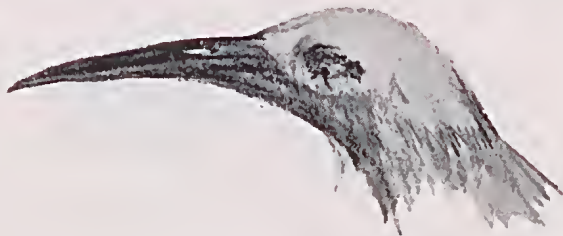
that the area is the type locality of one of our rarest jewel beetles. In September 1932 when collecting insects on the bushes there I was astonished to see a strange jewel beetle settle on a shrub which the Government Botanist (Mr. C. A. Gardner) kindly identified as *Myoporum insulare* R. Br. When specimens were shown to that well-known collector, Horace W. Brown, he stated that the beetle was new to him and subsequently forwarded specimens to H. J. Carter, who gave it the name *Stigmodera (Castiarina) magnetica*, the specific name being a misnomer owing to the transposition of the label with that of another specimen from Mount Magnet forwarded to him at the same time.

It would seem that the range of the species was more or less confined to a limited area. The original site has been denuded of the plant and elsewhere only one locality, near North Street, Swanbourne, has yielded specimens of the beetle. Searches at Wembley, where the *Myoporum* also occurs, have failed to yield specimens. The beetle measures about five-eighths of an inch in length by a quarter of an inch (the female), and is a beautiful insect when seen on the wing. The head, thorax and under-surface are a coppery bronze and so also is the abdomen above. The elytra are buff with blackish metallic markings which may be described as two wide irregular cross-bars on the apical half and a narrow edging along the suture. There are also variable markings at the base and two small spots near the lateral margins which are consistently present.

—L. GLAUERT, W.A. Museum, Perth

**Noddy Terns at Dunsborough.**—On June 13 and 14 this little settlement was visited by a terrific gale, with occasional rain. The sea, which normally is very calm here, was roaring in with great waves, and during its worst period we found congregated on the beach thousands of birds of a type we do not see here. After flying up and down all day they settled by evening upon the small trees and bushes that grow almost to the water's edge. One could go to them and pick them off the branches, they were so exhausted. Some of the birds tried to fish but without success. There were two types, one with almost white head, and the other grey all over with no difference on the head. When the storm abated on June 15 many of them flew away, but more than two hundred lay dead.

—MARGARET JOHNSON, Dunsborough Beach, via Busselton



Field Sketch by Mrs. Margaret Johnson.